

## **Islamic proselytising between Lamu and Mozambique: the case of Kizingitini village**

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Islam was first introduced along Kenya's coast during the twelfth century AD, mainly through trade. Merchants from Persia and the Arabian Peninsula frequented the East African coast, opening up religious networks that facilitated the spread of Islam in the region. Yemeni cities such as Hadramawt exchanged religio-cultural values with the East African coast for many generations. Dissemination of religious knowledge was one of the characteristic features of these networks. However, the transfer of religious knowledge on Kenya's coast was marred with bias: nobility and class position were determinant factors in knowledge acquisition. This led to the emergence of alternative networks that disseminated religious knowledge. Some of the new players included individual *mujadid* (reformers) who competed for religious influence through the dissemination of religious teaching. One such reformer is Sheikh Harith Swaleh (b. 1937), who imparted religious knowledge to the people of Kizingitini, when they had been marginalised for a long period. Thereafter, the influence of Kizingitini reverberated along the East African coast and reached as far south as Mozambique. This article examines the struggle of a community in acquiring Islamic knowledge against many odds. It focuses on pedagogic methods employed in the village, competing teaching traditions of Islamic learning, and the creation of a new religious network in the region. Furthermore, the study explores the impact of conflict and class division in Islamic proselytising in a village context.

**Keywords:** religious network; discrimination; reform; class division; Kizingitini; Mozambique; competing teaching traditions

### **Introduction**

Lamu was an important religious centre for many centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century, it produced great scholars, such as Sheikh Feisal bin Ali al-Lamy (1838–1918); Sayyid Abdurrahman As-Saggaf (1844–1922); Sheikh Kale bin Bwana Mkuu (d. 1918) and Habib Saleh Jamal al-Layl (d. 1936), who became influential on the East African coast (Farsy 1972). These scholars consisted of indigenous people (Swahili) and the offspring of Arab immigrants, some of whom shared descent with the Prophet Muhammad, thereby gaining the title *sayyid* or *sharif* (pl. *ashraf*). By the twentieth century, Lamu was dotted with several *ashraf* families specialising in religious teaching, commerce and craft.

Jamal al-Layl is one of the *ashraf* families that settled in Lamu during the nineteenth century and augmented the grandeur of the town as a centre of spiritual

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excellence. The central figure of the family was Habib Saleh Alawi Jamal al-Layl (1853–1936), born of a Comorian mother and an Arab father from Yemen. His first visit to Lamu was in 1870, where he studied under local scholars and later founded the Riyadha Mosque College in 1900. By the time of his death in 1936, Riyadha Mosque College had become influential in East Africa as a centre for learning and pilgrimage (Lienhardt 1957; Bin Sumeit Khitamy 1995).

Although the influence of Riyadha Mosque College spread beyond Lamu, their policy of disseminating religious knowledge was sometimes exclusive, and some communities within Lamu did not benefit from their wealth of knowledge. A case in point is the Bajuni community of Kizingitini, who were denied Islamic knowledge for generations until they obtained it from other sources.<sup>1</sup> This article argues that the selective method of Riyadha Mosque College in disseminating religious knowledge was based on eliminating competition and maintaining dominance over religious scholarship. This was often done discreetly in three forms. Firstly, the Riyadha Mosque College adopted a syllabus devoid of meaningful contents. Secondly, students memorised long texts of *qasidah* (songs) glorifying Sufi saints. Thirdly, students were engaged in errands such as domestic chores, denying them adequate time for learning.

This study is informed by interviews and oral narratives conducted in 2011. The analysis of these interviews helps to deconstruct the role played by Sheikh Harith Swaleh in disseminating religious teachings in Kizingitini. From these interviews, I argue that Sheikh Harith had no option but to challenge the hegemony of the Riyadha Mosque College elites in order to succeed in his mission. The study is divided into two parts: the first examines the rise of Kizingitini and the birth of reformist trends, while the second discusses the impact of the Kizingitini tradition in Mozambique and elsewhere. The article as a whole is arranged thematically.

### **Part 1: The rise of Kizingitini village**

Located in Pate Island, Kizingitini is a remote fishing village, insignificant in terms of the ancient history of the Lamu archipelago. It rarely appeared on the map of the archipelago or Pate Island on which it is situated. By the mid-twentieth century, Kizingitini became important economically when the fishing industry was commercialised. Indian merchants from Mombasa made regular purchases of sea products from the village and transported them in steam-engine boats fitted with cold-storage facilities. The economic boom attracted many people to the village, which eventually became a vibrant trading centre. By 1950, Kizingitini was baptised “Roma” as result of economic prosperity, demographic growth and religious fervour.

These changes triggered a spiritual zeal in the village. During that time, the only religious institutions present consisted of a mosque and a couple of Qur'an schools (*chuo*) with pioneer *chuo* teachers like Mwalimu Athman Shali, Mwalimu Swaleh, Mwalimu Omar Kibwana and Mwalimu Aboud wa Bwana. Yet the learning that was conducted in the Qur'an schools was not adequate, as it consisted of memorisation of the Qur'an and rudimentary teachings of Islam.

Affluent members of the community sent their children to Riyadha Mosque College in Lamu and other *madrasahs* for proper religious education. For example, the village elder, Sheikh Salim Fumo, sent his children to Riyadha Mosque College for that purpose. They included Muhammad Salim, Hashim Salim and Ali Salim. Another son of Sheikh Salim Fumo, Jaafar Salim Fumo, was sent to Yemen as a

teenager and returned to Kizingitini when he was a young adult. All this reinforced the relationship between the Riyadha elites and the house of Salim Fumo, which by extension meant the Kizingitini community.

The marriage of Sayyid Abdurrahman Ahmad Badawy Jamal al-Layl (Sharif Khitami) of Riyadha Mosque College in Kizingitini in the 1950s was welcomed by many in the village.<sup>2</sup> Although Sharif Khitami did not make Kizingitini his permanent residence, he made intermittent visits where he shared religious knowledge with the local community. It is reported that one of his trips took place a few days before the holy month of Ramadhan. The village elders entreated him to spend Ramadhan with them so that they might benefit from his religious experience. Sharif Khitami declined the request citing hardship such as scarcity of fresh water and meat supply as a hindrance to remaining in the village. Addressing those concerns, the village headman, Sheikh Salim Fumo, offered hundreds of gallons of harvested rainwater (*maji ya mvua*) for his exclusive use, while a merchant named Zamzam Saidi offered 30 goats and other supplies to ensure a comfortable sojourn for the *sharif*. Yet, Sharif Khitami refused to remain in Kizingitini despite these concessions.<sup>3</sup>

In 1954, the people of Kizingitini sent a delegation to Riyadha Mosque College in Lamu requesting a religious teacher. Sayyid Ali Muhammad Ahmed Badawy Jamal al-Layl (Mwenye Ali Dini) was dispatched to the village for that purpose. He offered classes at the house of Sheikh Salim Fumo because the village did not have a *madrasah* building yet. However, Mwenye Ali Dini moved back to Lamu before he completed a year, citing hardship as a challenge for him. In fact, however, the people of Kizingitini were disappointed in him not because he went away but for failing to meet their expectations. The village expected to see changes in the students he taught; but his syllabus emphasised memorisation of praises for the prophet (*maulidi*) and glorification of the Jamal al-Layl family and other network members. However, the current principal of Riyadha Mosque College, Sharif Muhsin Sayyid Ali Badawy Jamal al-Layl, avers that Mwenye Ali left Kizingitini out of personal choice and not because of any wrongdoing.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the people of Kizingitini continued to depend on Riyadha Mosque College in Lamu for their religious needs despite many disappointments. They often sailed for two days and nights to seek clarification on matters as mundane as menstruation or ablution before prayers.

Gradually, Kizingitini elders suspected that the religious elites from Riyadha Mosque College were determined to deny them access to meaningful religious knowledge and therefore looked for an alternative source of knowledge.

### ***Paradigm shift***

In 1956, the Kizingitini elders looked for another religious teacher. They went back to Lamu town but away from Riyadha Mosque College. They approached Sayyid Muhammad Adnan al-Ahdaly (1896–1963), who had several students whom he coached at Rawdha Mosque. The elders requested a teacher for only six months so as to teach *nahw* (Arabic grammar) to a few people who had a better understanding of religion in the village. Perhaps the Kizingitini elders prudently requested a teacher for a shorter period for fear that their request would be rejected had they asked for a longer term, due to hardship in the village.

In response, Sayyid Muhammad Adnan summoned one of his disciples named Harith Swaleh Abdurrahman al-Amawy, then 17 years old. He informed him of the

two available teaching positions; one in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, offering a monthly salary of 500 Kenyan shillings, the other in Kizingitini village with a monthly pay of 60 shillings. Sayyid Adnan asked his disciple to consult his parents on the two choices. The parent-teacher consultation resolved that he should take the second option, and he ended up spending 30 years in Kizingitini village.<sup>5</sup> Some of the Riyadha elites are of the opinion that the elders of Kizingitini approached Riyadha Mosque College for the second time to provide them with a religious teacher. In that case, Sayyid Abdurrahman Badawy Jamal al-Layl (Sharif Khitami) proposed Sheikh Harith Swaleh for that job, a claim that many people contest.<sup>6</sup>

Sheikh Harith Swaleh (Figure 1) was born in 1937 in Lamu to Swaleh Abdurrahman bin Omar al-Maawy (d. 1984) and Rukiya bin Abdallah bin Athman al-Maawy (d. 1986). His father was an artist designing Muslim caps (*kofia*) popular along the East African coast, while his mother was a seamstress. Sheikh Harith



Figure 1. Sheikh Harith Swaleh Abdurrahman, 1971. (Photograph owned by author; a gift from the subject)

received Qur'anic education from *Mwalimu* Bwanaheri Mkuza (1902–1982), but his main teacher/mentor was Sayyid Muhammad Adnan Al-Ahdaly, who conducted his classes (*halaqah*) at Rawdha Mosque after *Maghrib* (sunset) prayers. In addition to mosque tuition, Sheikh Harith attended *madrasah* classes at Najah Islamic School (*Madrasatu Najah al Islamiyah*), located at Pwani Mosque, where among his teachers was Sayyid Alwy bin Ahmad Badawy Jamal al-Layl, alias Mzee Mwenye (d. 2008). In 1965, Sheikh Harith pursued his studies at the legendary al-Azhar University in Egypt, where he gained a diploma in Islamic Studies and later joined Omdurman Islamic University in Sudan in 1969, specialising in Islamic Studies and Philosophy.

In Kizingitini, Sheikh Harith conducted religious classes in the house of Sheikh Salim Fumo. He arranged his students in different age groups comprising teenagers, adults and elderly ones such as Qur'an teachers and mosque imams. He allocated different times to different groups and tailored the syllabus to suit specific group needs. The syllabus employed by Sheikh Harith in Kizingitini was similar to the one used at Riyadha Mosque College and other religious centres in Kenya. It consisted of booklets mainly on *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), which catered for different stages of learning. They included *Risalat al-Jamia*, *Safinat an-Najaa* by Sheikh Salim bin Sameer al-Hadramy, *Hidayat al-Atfal* by Sheikh Al-Amin bin Ali, *Durar al-Bahiya* by Sayyid Abi Bakr bin Muhammad, *Bidayat al-Hidaya* by Imam Abi Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Tafsir Jalalayn* by Jalal ad-din as-Suyuti and Jalal ad-din al-Mahalli, *Umdat as-Salik* by Ibn Naqib al-Masry, and *Fat-h al-Mueen* by Sheikh Zainudeen Abdulaziz al-Malyabari. These teaching manuals and books were common in mosques and *madrasahs* along the East African coast. If one wanted to know the level of learning a student had reached, he just needed to mention the manual or book he was using in the mosque or *madrasah*. *Safinat an-Najaa* represented a rudimentary level of learning, while *Fat-h al-Mueen* symbolised an advanced stage of scholarship. In most cases, the teacher would read the text in Arabic and translate it into the local language (Swahili) while students repeated after the teacher and were expected to memorise it after a couple of days.

On that note, some scholars observed that the books used on the East African coast were uniform and constituted a résumé for all religious scholars in the region (Pouwels 1987; Chanfi 1999). These booklets were published in Egypt and Beirut, while others were obtained from India. In Kenya, the booklets were sold by Indian merchants, notably Haji Mohamed and Sons, Sidiq Mbarak, and Shamsudin Haji Ahmed & Co., based in Mombasa town.

The efforts of Sheikh Harith in working with the people of Kizingitini were full of challenges. Firstly, many parents could not afford to buy the booklets mentioned above for their children. Sheikh Harith therefore wrote the class work on the blackboard for students to copy. Secondly, Kizingitini village was mainly polarised into two opposing groups. The fact that Sheikh Salim Fumo was a leader of one of the factions meant that his rivals could not visit his house to access religious learning, so a separate arrangement had to be made for the other group until Sheikh Harith succeeded in dismantling the warring factions. Thirdly, Sheikh Harith received his salary for the first three months only. According to *Mwalimu* Shebwana, his companion and Qur'an teacher, "the people stopped raising the agreed salary of 60 shillings and Sheikh Harith never complained."<sup>7</sup> Fourth, there was a lot of external interference, particularly from Riyadha Mosque College. Nevertheless, Sheikh Harith devised some mechanisms to insulate the people from this negative

influence, as we shall see shortly. Finally, the house of Sheikh Salim Fumo was no longer adequate as the number of students increased. Hence, it was necessary to construct a spacious building as a *madrasah*.

The impact of Sheikh Harith's teachings was felt just a few months after he settled in the village. For instance, it is reported that some students identified grammatical errors when the imam of the village, Sheikh Imam Bwana, delivered the Friday sermon (*khutbah*). They challenged the Imam and questioned his suitability and competence.<sup>8</sup> The Imam and his allies approached Sheikh Harith for a separate tuition arrangement because they could not attend the *madrasah*, as they had issues with Sheikh Salim Fumo who owned the *madrasah* building. Sheikh Harith made a separate arrangement for them until they attained competence in Arabic grammar (*nahw*).

This grammar incident provides insight into the relationship between power and ownership of sacred places in Muslim communities. Sheikh Salim Fumo, for example, gained the authority to determine who accessed religious knowledge by virtue of owning the building that housed the *madrasah*. This demonstrates that, in Muslim communities, power and authority is gained through ownership and control of mosques and other symbols of Islam. The Imam incident equally provides an opportunity to understand Sheikh Harith's personality. He ensured that justice prevailed in the village when he made a separate teaching arrangement to the Imam and his group. It is narrated that Sheikh Salim Fumo accosted Sheikh Harith on one occasion while he was going to teach the Imam, and strongly rebuked him. The junior teacher (Sheikh Harith) confronted his employer (Sheikh Salim Fumo) and made it very clear that he was ready to pack and go back home if such interference did not desist.<sup>9</sup> Thereafter, Sheikh Harith mobilised community support to construct a spacious *madrasah* building to accommodate more students and ensure an independent learning environment.

### ***Construction of the madrasah***

In 1958, Madrasatul Badawy was constructed in Kizingitini and consisted of several classrooms. People of different social backgrounds participated in the project. Apart from residents of Kizingitini, the people from the neighbouring villages of Mbwa-jumwali, Myabogi, Tchundwa and Faza volunteered in the construction process. Men and women worked tirelessly to ensure the successful completion of the institution. It is reported that the funds and materials needed for the construction was contributed by the local population despite their meagre resources.

Sheikh Harith decided to name the new *madrasah* after a great personality, Sayyid Ahmad Badawy Jamal al-Layl (1925–1974) from Riyadha Mosque College. The choice of the name suggests that Sheikh Harith had no problems with Riyadha Mosque College. Furthermore, his teacher and mentor (Sayyid Adnan) had studied under Habib Saleh Jamal al-Layl, the founder of Riyadha Mosque College.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Sheikh Harith considers Sayyid Ali Ahmed Badawy Jamal al-Layl (d. 1989) and Sayyid Alwy Ahmed Badawy Jamal al-Layl (Mzee Mwenye, d. 2008) of Riyadha Mosque College as among his teachers. However, it appears that the friendly gestures of Sheikh Harith towards Riyadha were inconsequential. The Riyadha elites wanted the Kizingitini people to receive minimal religious teaching, enough only to have a basic understanding of their faith. Anything above that was a threat to their hegemony and justified sabotage and sanctions.

The hegemony of Riyadha Mosque College was cultivated mostly through three main structures. These included religious teaching, magic and healing, and the administration of *maulidi* and other rituals. These activities gave Riyadha Mosque College unrivalled economic and religious power for many generations. For example, the Swahili people visited Riyadha elites for healing, and only pursued modern medical services as a last resort. The *maulidi* festival and other ritual celebrations provided the Riyadha elites with material resources and social capital throughout the year. Moreover, the alumni of Riyadha Mosque College created a countrywide network that increased their influence. To ensure continuity of these privileges, the Riyadha elites had to confront any threat with full force.

Traditionally, the main threat to Riyadha influence came from Mombasa through the Mazrui family. The reformist teachings of Sheikh Al-Amin bin Ali Mazrui and his disciples, notably Sheikh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui and Sheikh Abdallah Saleh al-Farsy (all of them became chief *kadhis* in Kenya) posed a challenge to their supremacy. However, this challenge, which aroused mediaeval rivalry between Lamu and Mombasa city-states, was distant and external. The evocation of past events made the reformist teachings from Mombasa less effective and helped Riyadha's influence grow in strength. Therefore, the Riyadha elites were not ready to accept a challenge from their backyard (Kizingitini) and from a person they helped to shape (Sheikh Harith).

It appears that Sheikh Harith understood the mentality of Riyadha elites from the onset. This helped him to develop a dual approach in dealing with them. The first was "accommodation" (giving the *madrasah* a Riyadha name) while "confrontation" was the second option. Sheikh Harith understood that challenging the Riyadha Mosque College was a herculean task. Riyadha had a strong network of mosques, *madrasahs* and families even within the village of Kizingitini. On the other hand, Sheikh Harith was alone and his only support was the students he was moulding.<sup>11</sup>

Sheikh Harith made his students conscious of the reality surrounding their education and formation. He enlisted the support of his senior students to teach the increasing number of students, some of whom came from distant villages, towns and neighbouring countries. For example, out of 200 students during the formative period of the *madrasah*, 20 came from neighbouring towns and countries. The newly appointed teachers were far older than Sheikh Harith but had rudimentary knowledge of the Qur'an when Sheikh Harith first arrived in Kizingitini. They included Mwalimu Omar Kibwana (d. 1984), Mwalimu Aboud Bwana (d. 1991) and Sheikh Fadhil Fakih (Bakombo). Sheikh Harith made his students aware of their common enemy through symbolism. For instance, he formulated a vision and mission statement for the *madrasah* which was loaded with messages of rebellion, independence and equality. Some of these messages appeared in the mission and vision statement of the *madrasah*, depicted in Figure 2.

This statement literally states, "the cockerel is crowing, a new day has begun and people have woken up." In the context of the village, the statement portends a break from the past that was infested with ignorance and manipulation. The statement was in direct reference to Riyadha Mosque College, which was perceived as an obstacle to the acquisition of Islamic knowledge in the area.

Students from other parts of Kenya and neighbouring countries Uganda and Tanzania enrolled as the *madrasah* gained momentum. It is amazing to note that these students travelled all the way to Kizingitini despite the remoteness of the area.



Figure 2. Mission and vision statement of the *madrasah*. (Photograph taken by author)

These external students had the option of joining established *madrasahs* in Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu which were in urban centres with basic luxuries. Certainly, there must have been pull factors in the *madrasah* in Kizingitini that justified their choice and trouble.

Here, three factors feature prominently. Firstly, the pedagogic method employed in Kizingitini was utilitarian and results-oriented. Young graduates from the village became teachers in different parts of the country, popularising the image of the *madrasah*. Secondly, the Bajuni<sup>12</sup> community, to which Kizingitini belongs, is open and matrilineal, where social avoidance between gender and class is almost non-existent (Bujra 1968). Students attending the *madrasah* in Kizingitini felt at home, as the community accepted them like any other member. On the contrary, *Wa-Amu* (the people of Lamu) is a different Swahili subgroup that is closed and highly patriarchal. Social avoidance between sex and class in Lamu is very high. External and foreign *madrasah* students have minimal interaction with the community. A common means of interaction with the community is when they get a chance to work as part-time house help (*boi*) to supplement their personal needs. In Lamu, external *madrasah* students are derogatively referred to as *mahaji* (sing. *haji*), which means a lowly person. For that reason, Kizingitini became friendlier than Lamu for students. Thirdly, some *madrasahs* and *ulama* (scholars) in Lamu were notoriously associated with homosexuality. That negative publicity made parents send their children to alternative centres of learning such as Kizingitini.

### ***The Somali trip***

While Sheikh Harith continued to impart religious knowledge through common books and pamphlets widely used in the region, it became apparent that these books

were not adequate to produce the students he envisioned. The question remained where and how to get additional books. In 1962, the local Member of Parliament for Lamu Constituency, Hon. Ahmed Mohamed Jeneby, gave Sheikh Harith a three-page handwritten letter (in Arabic) introducing him to a government official in the office of the Prime Minister in Mogadishu, Somalia. As the Somali trip approached, Mr Mbwamadi Mohammed Omar of Kizingitini offered his dhow, *MV Sultan*, for the trip, which was captained by Mr Fumo bin Hassan, alias "Mao Dilmo." Kizingitini elders also donated some money to Sheikh Harith for the trip. In Mogadishu, Sheikh Harith was offered five scholarships by the Somali government for his students to pursue further studies at *Maahad Islamy fi Somaliyah* in Mogadishu. The same year, Sheikh Harith sent Mahmoud Swaleh Abdurrahman to Somalia as part of the scholarship programme.

Sheikh Harith visited the central mosque in Mogadishu, *Masjid Marwas*, where he requested to give a *qalimah* (a short religious speech) following afternoon prayers. After the speech, he became acquainted with some Egyptians who introduced him to the "Al Azhar Mission" of Egypt, which organised a dhow-load of books for him to take to Kizingitini. Furthermore, a merchant of Indian extraction named Haji Ibrahim offered Sheikh Harith a room for purposes of accommodation when he realised that the sheikh could not afford a simple hotel room and instead lived in a dhow that did not have proper accommodation facilities.<sup>13</sup>

The method of Sheikh Harith in seeking advanced religious texts for his students was a departure from normative practices in one respect. He approached a politician with little knowledge of religion instead of distinguished scholars with influence and religious networks in South Arabia, particularly Yemen. For example, Anne Bang noted that family networks in East Africa (1860–1925) were active along the coast of the Indian Ocean (Bang 2003). The Alawi influence was evident in almost all major towns on the East African coast. Sheikh Harith was expected to approach the *ulama* with Yemeni connections for advanced teaching materials and scholarships for further studies.

The books obtained from Somalia were extremely useful for the *madrasah* students. The subject-matter of those books included Islamic jurisprudence, history, philosophy, arithmetic, geography, biology and Arabic language in all forms. The books were kept in a library in the house of a merchant named Zamzam Saidi, where every student had easy access.

### ***Pedagogic methods of Kizingitini***

Sheikh Harith's teaching methods were not different from other *madrasahs* but contained innovative elements that were a departure from the normal practice. Firstly, Sheikh Harith emphasised the proper comprehension of Arabic in all its branches. This was a radical shift from ordinary pedagogic methods, where Arabic language was secondary. Even now, there are still prominent scholars along the East African coast who can competitively render sacred texts from Arabic to local languages without necessarily being fluent in Arabic. Commenting on the importance of Arabic as a medium of instruction and a vital learning tool, Sheikh Ahmed Msallam (b. 1948), an alumnus of Madrasatul Badawy and a graduate of Omdurman University, Sudan, observed that

The emphasis on Arabic language was one of the secrets behind the success of Sheikh Harith in Kizingitini. Such linguistic tools enabled us to venture into new territories asking questions and at times challenging the status quo. The language was like a key to a beautiful house. The only difference was that after introducing us to the magnificent house, Sheikh Harith left the keys with us so that we could make further visits. Meanwhile, in other madrasahs, the key remained with the teacher which made further visits for students to the beautiful house difficult.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, as a philosophical framework, it appears that Sheikh Harith based his teaching practice on *social constructivism*, which views learning as a process in which the learner actively constructs or builds new ideas and concepts based upon current and past knowledge or experience. For instance, social constructivism regards knowledge as constructed when individuals engage socially in talk and activity about shared problems or tasks. They also take learning as a process by which individuals are introduced to culture by more skilled members. Here, the teacher acts as a facilitator who encourages students to discover principles for themselves and to construct knowledge by working to solve realistic problems (Glaserfeld 1995; Kukla 2000).

Commenting on the teaching methodology of Sheikh Harith, Sharif Muhsih Sayyid Ali Jamal al-Layl stated that the Kizingitini teaching method was not influenced by Riyadha Mosque College because Riyadha did not have a syllabus by then, as it was using the *halaqah* method where several students sat around a scholar and learned from him. However, he exonerated Sheikh Harith for undermining the Riyadha influence and instead blamed his students for rebelliousness. He clarified that the Riyadha Mosque leadership always viewed Sheikh Harith with suspicion because he did not stop his disciples from antagonising the Riyadha establishment.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of Kizingitini, *madrasah* students discussed various issues of religious concerns amongst themselves. Equipped with modern Arabic skills and a roadmap to an analytical approach to knowledge, they ventured into new territories where they re-examined some long-held practices in light of credible religious evidence. Moreover, they consulted their teacher whenever they doubted a particular conviction.

For his part, Sheikh Harith often avoided a “Yes/No” answer and instead engaged them in an academic discussion as to how they arrived on a particular premise. Once satisfied with their arguments, Sheikh Harith asked his students to reach a conclusion on a particular issue. That way, the students of Madrasatul Badawy challenged some long-held religious practices as *bid 'a* (innovation), a practice that infuriated the elites from Riyadha Mosque College.

Thirdly, Sheikh Harith employed “active learning” methods (Grant 2000) while imparting knowledge to his students. Here, he made some arrangements where each student gave a *darsah* (lecture) in the mosque surrounded by the student fraternity and other worshippers from the village. During the entire *darsah* process, the student played the role of the imam/teacher while fellow students grilled him in all manners possible. Afterwards, Sheikh Harith, who normally sat in the back row of the mosque, gave his remarks on the performance of that day’s student.

Another aspect of active learning employed by Sheikh Harith included “learning by teaching.” For example, he dispatched some of his senior students to teach in the nearby villages during the morning session while they returned to the *madrasah* to continue with their classes in the afternoon. By 1963 for instance, Sheikh Ahmed

Msallam was sent to Faza village, Sheikh Fadhil Fakih was dispatched to Tchundwa village, while Sheikh Ahmad Sharif was assigned Mbwajumwali village. That way, the students gained confidence in the role they played. Furthermore, Sheikh Harith used class games and outdoor sports such as soccer as part of the learning process. He played soccer alongside his students and at times went for soccer tournaments in neighbouring villages and islands.

Finally, discipline was strongly inculcated among *madrasah* students. For example, a senior student named Sharif Muhaji (Basharifu) was charged with the responsibility of moving from house to house in the evening to check who revised class work and who did not. Parents also reported cases of their children's misconduct to Basharifu. Before classes began the following morning, Basharifu read out the names of students with cases of indiscipline with specific charges. Thereafter, Sheikh Harith administered some form of corporal punishment to the offenders. That way, the *madrasah* became both a socialisation as well as an agent of social control in the village. These innovative practices contributed to the success of Madrasatul Badawy in transmitting Islamic learning along the Indian Ocean coast.

### *The decline of Riyadha's influence*

The existence of the *madrasah* in Kizingitini was threatened as it approached its zenith in 1964. The policy of the newly independent government of Kenya to introduce a secular school in the village ended the monopoly enjoyed by the *madrasah* in knowledge dissemination. The government developed an education policy to redress colonial injustices on different communities in the country. The Muslim community in Kenya is one group that did not benefit from the colonial education provided by Christian missionary groups promoting Western and Christian values. The appointment of the Ominde Commission to revamp the educational system in the country brought changes to many communities. The Ominde report discarded the colonial education system, which was racist, and introduced a curriculum that emphasised compulsory primary education for all Kenyans (Ominde 1964; Datta 1984; Bogonko 1992). It is within this context that the independent government of Kenya proposed a secular school in Kizingitini.

The village elders expected Riyadha elites to oppose the secular school as it had done before in Lamu and other places. The opposition to secular education was on the basis that it was based on Christian principles that undermined Islamic values. On the contrary, the Riyadha leadership accepted the idea of having a secular school in the village on condition that the building that housed Madrasatul Badawy was used for secular education. Paradoxically, the Riyadha elites wanted the secular school to replace the *madrasah*. As the village elders tried to digest the decree from Riyadha Mosque College, the future of the *madrasah* hung in the balance. The uncertainty of the *madrasah* was real as it was a belief that to "disobey" Riyadha *ashraf* was tantamount to courting the wrath of Allah and his prophet (El-Zein 1974).

The Riyadha elites did not mind contradicting their well-known stand on secular education, as long as it safeguarded their interests. They tried to take advantage of the government policy so as to undermine the *madrasah* in Kizingitini. The Riyadha leaders still had influence in Kizingitini, despite changes taking place in the village. They wanted to seize the opportunity to destabilise the *madrasah* once and for all. The Riyadha elites were so powerful that they were regarded as infallible.<sup>16</sup> For

example, they had the authority to punish heresy and disrupt the lives of individuals and communities through decrees and sanctions.<sup>17</sup>

In that sombre mood, Sheikh Harith came up with suggestions as the village elders remained stupefied. Sheikh Harith opposed the idea of undermining the *madrasah* and proposed constructing a separate building for the secular school where land was free and plenty. The stand of Sheikh Harith displeased the Riyadha elites where they issued a harsher decree. They ordered Kizingitini elders to expel Sheikh Harith from the village or risk a *maulidi* boycott. This meant Riyadha Mosque College would stop performing the annual *maulidi* celebration in the village. It was believed that such a boycott could wreak havoc and place the village under a curse. After a long consultation, the village elders decided to retain Sheikh Harith but continued to beseech the Riyadha elites to rescind their decision.

### **The maulidi war**

As the Riyadha elites honoured their threat of the boycott, the students from Madrasatul Badawy decided to “perform” *maulidi* for the village. They tried *maulidi Barzanji*, which was not associated with Riyadha Mosque College. This form of *maulidi* was less popular compared to *maulidi al-Habshy* of the Riyadha Mosque. The Riyadha version of *maulidi* involved songs (*qasidah*), drumming and dancing. The local population felt the loss brought about by the boycott.

The following year, Kizingitini students introduced an Indian form of *maulidi* with melodious tunes and *qasidah*. Those reciting *maulidi* sat on chairs, as opposed to floor mats as was the tradition. In the third year, the students added Somali *qasidah*, which was equally attractive. All these efforts rendered Riyadha’s sanction inconsequential. In the fourth year of the boycott, Riyadha elites looked for an exit strategy to return to Kizingitini village before they lost their influence entirely.<sup>18</sup>

The Riyadha elites expressed interest in performing *maulidi* in Kizingitini the following year. The Kizingitini leadership opposed such a move and vowed to oppose their return. It appears that Sheikh Harith was involved in that campaign as well. Handwritten posters were placed in strategic places bearing the message “NO SHARIF.” That message connoted two interpretations. The first meaning implied that the *sharifs* should not return to Kizingitini for the purposes of *maulidi*; while the second interpretation inferred that the belief that some people shared descent with Prophet Muhammad was a false claim. The fact that the posters were written in English suggests that Sheikh Harith was directly involved, because he was among the few people in the village who understood English and encouraged his students to learn it. Sheikh Harith further contested the definition of the concept of “*sharif*” and went ahead to redefine it. He argued that a *sharif* is a person who exalted himself (*man sharafa nafsahu*) and concluded that anyone in the village could become a *sharif* upon adherence of the right code of conduct in conformity with the Qur’an and the teachings of the prophet (*Sunnah*).<sup>19</sup>

Applying divide-and-rule tactics, the Riyadha elites approached the leadership of a poor neighbourhood in the village (*Kwayiou*) and requested to perform *maulidi* for them. This stoked inter-class animosity in the village, which culminated in a physical confrontation. To avoid bloodshed, the government intervened and permitted the Riyadha elites to conduct *maulidi* for the group that was interested. However, the *maulidi* conducted for the people of *Kwayiou* took a low profile because the majority of village people, particularly the ruling class, opposed it.

The people of *Kwayiou* are poor and less educated compared with the rest of the village. They have a darker complexion and are mainly fishermen, a profession considered lowly in the village. They are also derogatively referred to as *migume-gume*, a term denoting primitiveness. Thus, when they got an offer from the Riyadha elites to perform an outdoor *maulidi* (there was no mosque in *Kwayiou* quarter) for them, they felt privileged and important. The Riyadha leadership equally had no respect for the people of *Kwayiou* but just used them as pawns to settle their score with the rest of the village. This incident demonstrates that class division is a social construct and prone to multiple manipulation depending on the interests of those who handle it.

The manipulation of social classes in Kizingitini was justified by the Riyadha leadership when they argued that they enjoyed the support of the majority of the people in the village. For example, Sharif Muhsin argued that it was only a small fraction of the village that opposed the Riyadha leadership. He boasted that many Kizingitini families, including that of Sheikh Salim Fumo, supported them. He insisted that the root cause of the opposition was jealousy and a *syatra* (power) struggle that he described as God-given. He expounded that the people of Kizingitini introduced a form of *maulidi* using modern instruments such as guitar and piano to undermine Riyadha tradition but instead that innovation fizzled out and the Riyadha Mosque continued with its rich mission of religion and tradition.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, Sharif Juneid Abdurrahman Badawy Jamal al-Layl (b. 1968), born of a Kizingitini mother and a Riyadha father, argues that the hatred for Riyadha's achievement stems from two factors. These include *wivu* (jealousy) and the adoption of political Islam in East Africa such as *Wahhabism*. He is of the opinion that if Riyadha Mosque College could get its act together and learn how to tame emerging trends in Islam, then they will continue to provide a leadership role in Islam in East Africa for generations to come.<sup>21</sup> This appears to be an old strategy of the Riyadha leadership when they sent one of their sons, Sharif Abdulkader Bahsan, to Saudi Arabia for advanced studies in early 1980s.

By 1965, Kizingitini had dispatched qualified teachers to various parts of the country and along the East African coast, while others got a chance to further their studies abroad. Traditionally, scholars in East Africa pursued their studies in institutions of higher learning in Yemen because of the rich network that existed along the East African coast. On the contrary, Sheikh Harith looked for inspiration from a different direction. It appears that he was fascinated by Egyptian scholars, particularly from the books he obtained from Somalia and a brief moment he shared with the Al-Azhar team in Mogadishu. Thus, Sheikh Harith approached the then Member of Parliament for Lamu East, the late Hon. Abu Somo (d. 1994), who facilitated a number of scholarships to Al-Azhar University in Egypt. In Kenya, this was a period of scholarship boom popularly known as "Air Lift," where the world superpowers competed for supremacy at the height of Cold War by offering scholarships to poor African students to study abroad. The scholarships Sheikh Harith received were part of the Air Lift programme obtained through Hon. Tom Mboya (1930–1969), who was a powerful cabinet minister during the Kenyatta regime (1963–1978) and an astute ideologue of Western thought.

Sheikh Harith became a changed person when he returned from Egypt in 1967. For instance, he discarded the traditional long robe (*kanzu*) and cap (*kofia*) worn by *ulama* in East Africa and instead donned Western outfits such as bell-bottomed trousers, shirts and a European cap (*chapeau*), and maintained long hair with a

popular hairstyle known as an “afro.” It appears that Sheikh Harith was influenced by the teachings of modernist Egyptian reformers such as Sheikh Muhammad Abdu (1849–1905) and Sheikh Rashid Rida (1865–1935). By the 1980s, the contribution of Kizingitini to Islamic missionary work had reached Dar-es-Salam and Mtwara in Tanzania, Antananarivo in Madagascar and Maputo in Mozambique, propagating Islamic reform and creating religious networks. Table 1 lists some of the networks created by Madrasatul Badawy in East Africa.

It is important to note that not all students of Sheikh Harith engaged in religious work after completing their studies. Some of them became merchants and traded locally and regionally, particularly in neighbouring Tanzania and Somalia. Others engaged in fishing within Lamu and other coastal towns of Malindi, Kilifi, Mombasa and Watamu, which has significant pockets of Bajuni. These fishermen became scholars of the sea in one way or another. For instance, Lamu residents were always mesmerised whenever fishermen from Kizingitini went to trade in their town. These fishermen (considered a lowly job) spoke Arabic fluently and engaged townspeople in religious debates.

Kizingitini scholars followed different trajectories in perpetuating the village tradition depending on circumstances on the ground. Some of them took an individual path and established their own institutions, while others were employed through

Table 1. Networks of Madrasatul Badawy, Kizingitini.

<i>Name of disciple</i>	<i>Place of study</i>	<i>Location of network created</i>
Sheikh Ahmed Msallam*	Kizingitini/Sudan	Faza, Kilifi, Namanga, Machakos, Nairobi
Sheikh Muhammad Sharif Famau*	Kizingitini/Saudi Arabia	Kizingitini/Malindi
Mohammed Shebwana**	Kizingitini/Libya	Myabogi, Namanga, Nairobi
Sayyid Salim*	Kizingitini/Libya	Kilifi
Ali Omar Mzamil**	Kizingitini/Libya	Eldoret
Sheikh Ali Shee**	Tchundwa, Egypt, Sudan	Malindi, Mombasa, Nairobi
Sheikh Ali Mohammed Mbwana**	Tchundwa/Libya	Kakamega
Sheikh Salim Mohammed Msallam*	Kizingitini	Kilifi
Sheikh Omar Kombo*	Kizingitini	Kilifi/Gasi
Sheikh Ba Hussein*	Kizingitini	Mlindi/Watamu
Sheikh Hassan Omar Siddik**	Faza/Iraq	Faza/Mombasa
Sheikh Mohammed Athman**	Likoni/Iraq	Nairobi
Sheikh Fadhil Fakih*	Kizingitini	Kilifi/Malindi
Sheikh Athman Suleiman*	Kizingitini	Kizingitini
Sheikh Ahmed Zubeir*	Kizingitini	Dodoma, Tanzania
Sheikh Ali Zubeir Ahmed*	Kizingitini	Tanga, Tanzania
Sheikh Abdul Hanan*	Kizingitini	Kampala, Arua – Uganda
Sheikh Yusuf Shebwana*	Kizingitini/Saudi Arabia	Antananarivo, Madagascar/Lilongwe, Malawi
Sheikh Ahmed Sharif*	Kizingitini/Saudi Arabia	Kenya/Mozambique (Maputo/Pemba)

\*First generation of students of Sheikh Harith; \*\*Students of disciples of Sheikh Harith.

community organisations and foreign establishments. Whichever direction they took, they always remembered the *madrasah* in Kizingitini and their teacher who turned their dreams into reality. One of the favourite disciples of Sheikh Harith was the late Sheikh Ahmad Sharif, who created religious networks both in Kenya and Mozambique. In his mission, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif perpetuated the legacy of Kizingitini and emulated the *modus operandi* of his mentor, as we shall see in the next section.

### **Part two: missionary work in Mozambique**

Like the rest of the East African coast, Islam was introduced in northern Mozambique by the Shirazis and later Arabs in the twelfth century. The port cities of Pemba, Angoche, Sofala and Mozambique Island boomed with trade prior to the coming of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. With the involvement of the region in the international slave trade during the nineteenth century, the Shirazi clans secured alliances with the powerful mainland reigning clans through conquest and kinship relations in order to access supplies of slaves and to control the caravan trade routes. This process was accompanied by conversion to Islam of the hinterland peoples in general, and in particular, of their reigning elites (Middleton 1992; Bonate 2007).

#### ***The Sufi orders***

The Portuguese conquest in Mozambique during the sixteenth century disrupted the Indian Ocean trade and undermined Islam in many ways. For instance, in the north, the Portuguese tore down mosques and imposed various restrictions on Muslim commerce and religious observance, including a prohibition on Muslim slave ownership (Newitt 1995). This led to the strengthening of ties between local Muslims and their co-religionists further afield in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia during the twentieth century. Unlike the British in East Africa, the Portuguese took a hostile stance toward Islam, attempting to eradicate Islamic education through the coastal communities of Cape Delgado, starting in the late 1930s. However, they did not succeed as some Sufi orders such as Shadhuliyya Yashrutiyya and Qadiriyya from Comoros and Zanzibar had been established since 1905. These Sufi orders played an important role in Islamic education through the introduction of Qur'an schools in several parts of Mozambique (Bonate 2007).

Between 1930 and 1950, the Portuguese in Mozambique introduced a policy known as "Portugalisation" through Catholic schooling. Their agenda was to transform their African colonial subjects into Portuguese citizens where they spoke their language and adopted their culture. As such, they found the Catholic schooling as the best partner in executing the programme. The Portuguese believed that it was easy to convert African Muslims of Mozambique to Christianity because their Islam was not original like that of the Middle East or India. Rather, they assumed that Mozambican Islam, *Islão Negro* (Black Islam) was a part of local African traditions and customs. The main aim of Catholic missions was to indoctrinate Muslim children with the basic principles of Christianity and force them to take Christian names.<sup>22</sup>

By 1960, the Portuguese colonial administration observed that the African liberation movement consisted of sizeable population of Muslims mainly from northern

Mozambique. To win them over, the colonial administration sent 17 Muslim leaders to Mecca for pilgrimage (*hajj*) in 1970. The government also financed the translation into Portuguese of a book on *hadith* (the tradition of the prophet).<sup>23</sup> They further made available the first translation of the holy Qur'an into the Portuguese language by Bento de Castro and distributed it for free. All these measures were introduced to win the confidence of Muslims in Mozambique during the period of liberation struggle (Sicard 2008).

### ***The Wahhabi influence***

During the same period, a group of Muslims who had studied in Deobandi, India and more significantly in Saudi Arabia, made their appearance in Mozambique. They contested the legality of some ritual practices such as *dhikr*, *maulidi* and funeral practices common amongst the Sufi orders. In Mozambique, this new group was referred to as *Wahhabi* after the founder of the movement, Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792). Moreover, the earliest person to be associated with Islamic reformism in Mozambique is Maulana Cassimo Tayob (d. 1974), who was trained at *Dar ul Ulum* seminary in Deobandi, India.

The earliest known *Wahhabi* who upset the Mozambican Muslim establishment was Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf, a grandson of the prominent Qadiriyya Sadat *khalifa* of Mozambique Island, Haji Ahmad Haji Yusuf, who returned from studies in Mecca in 1960. Sheikh Yusuf stirred controversy when he refused to take part in burial practices when his mother died in 1968 because it was not conducted in the proper Islamic manner. Others who studied at Madina University in Saudi Arabia after completing their studies at Deobandi included Sheikh Abubacar Musa Ismael alias 'Manjra' (d. 2000) and Sheikh Aminuddin Muhammad, the chairperson of Conselho Islamico de Mozambique and the principal of Hamza Mosque College in Matola, Mozambique.<sup>24</sup>

At *Anwaril* mosque in Maputo, Sheikh Abubacar Manjra was the most vocal amongst the *Wahhabis* in Mozambique and was always ready to confront any person whom he believed was on the wrong side of Islam. It is reported that in 1995, the minister for justice in Mozambique, Hon. Jose Ibrahim Aboud, went to Sofala for a *ziyara* (saint veneration) in the tomb of Mwenye Mkulu, which was broadcast on national television. The following Friday, the Sofala trip became the theme of Sheikh Abubacar's sermon. He pointed at the honourable minister who was in the mosque and told him what he did in Sofala was an innovation (*bid' a*) and an act of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) and that he should not do it again.<sup>25</sup>

Besides his controversial proselytising approach, Sheikh Abubacar Manjra made tremendous contributions to Islam and development in Mozambique. Firstly, he championed the formation of Conselho Islamico de Mozambique in 1983 and served as its Secretary General until his death in 2000. Secondly, under the auspices of Conselho Islamico de Mozambique he spearheaded the entrance of the state of Mozambique in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) in 1988. Thirdly, he helped many poor Mozambican Muslims pursue their religious studies abroad, notably in Saudi Arabia, Sudan and other Arab countries. Fourthly, he helped construct several mosques and *madrasahs* all over Mozambique. Finally, together with his colleagues, he facilitated the coming of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif, an alumnus of Madrasatul Badawy, Kizingitini, and a graduate of Madina University, Saudi Arabia, to Mozambique to impart religious learning.

### **The impact of Sheikh Ahmed Sharif in Mozambique**

Sheikh Ahmed Sharif (1948–2008) was among the prominent students of Kizingitini. After graduating from Madina University in Saudi Arabia in 1973, he embarked on teaching in several towns in Kenya. Some of the prominent students of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif in Kenya are listed in Table 2.

These scholars have made a mark in Kenyan society as they have participated over the years in discursive traditions on matters such as the *bid' a* controversy, sighting of the moon, governance and Islamic reform in general.

In 1988, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif moved to Maputo, Mozambique, where he disseminated Islamic learning for 20 years until his death in September 2008. The decision to move to Mozambique was a personal choice that was made easy by a network of scholars and colleagues from student times in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the *Wahhabis* in Mozambique requested him through the Saudi Arabian religious attaché in Nairobi, Kenya. Upon arrival, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif was welcomed and hosted by Sheikh Abubacar Manjra and Sheikh Aminuddin Muhammad and for that matter began teaching at *Anwaril madrasah*, which is a *Wahhabi* stronghold in Mozambique. After a couple of years at *Anwaril*, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif moved to Mafalala, a poor neighbourhood of Maputo, where he taught at the Sufi mosques of Itifaqq and Qadiriyah.

The shift from *Anwaril* to Sufi mosques in Mafalala raises many questions. However, his widow, Husna Ahmad, felt that the transfer of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif to Mafalala was a normal one. There was neither misunderstanding nor love lost with his colleagues at *Anwaril*. On the other hand, one of the students of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif in Maputo cited language barriers as a factor that made the sheikh move to Mafalala. This is because Portuguese is the language of Islam in Mozambique, which Sheikh Ahmad Sharif did not speak, whereas Mafalala has a strong concentration of Comorian immigrants and people from Northern Mozambique who speak Kiswahili fluently.

In Mafalala, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif devoted his time teaching in the Qadiriyah mosque between 10 am until 12 noon, while at Itifaqq mosque he operated between 4 pm and 6 pm. In these mosques, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif taught adult students who were *madrasah* teachers and mosque imams. He taught a wide range of subjects such as *fiqh*, *tawheed*, *hadith*, *tafsir* and Arabic. At times he gave extra tuition to some students either in the mosque or in his house, which was within Mafalala.

Sheikh Ahmad Sharif's approach in imparting religious knowledge was unique. He appreciated everyone, regardless of their religious interpretations. He respected his students despite the fact that he was a *Wahhabi* while they were Sufis. He taught them what he believed was the right interpretation of Islam without

Table 2. Sheikh Ahmed Sharif's students in Kenya.

Name	Madrasah attended	Current position
Sheikh Ali Shee	Tchundwa/Sudan	Former kadhi and imam, Jamia mosque, Nairobi
Sheikh Ahmad M. Athman	Dar al Ulum/Iraq	Imam, Landhies mosque, Nairobi
Sheikh Ali Bahero	Dar al Ulum	Imam, Bakarani mosque, Mombasa
Sheikh Mohamed Janben	Dar al ulum	Imam, Ali bin Taib mosque, Mombasa

castigating Sufi practices. That way, he earned the respect of his students and the entire Sufi fraternity in Mozambique. More importantly, he attended some Sufi ceremonies such as *maulidi* and *khitma* whenever he was invited. Sometimes he was requested to give a *qalimah* (a short religious speech), in which case one of his students would translate his speech into Portuguese. This approach is reminiscent of his teacher, Sheikh Harith Swaleh, who attends some Sufi functions without necessarily compromising his religious conviction. It was also the approach of the great scholar and chief *Kadhi* of Kenya, the late Sheikh Abdalla Saleh al-Farsi (1912–1982), who, despite being a *Wahhabi*, attended Sufi functions for the sake of Muslim unity in Kenya.

Sheikh Ahmad Sharif produced many students in Mozambique, some of whom are listed in Table 3. The effectiveness of the approach of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif in Maputo manifests in changes that are taking place in Sufi mosques that are headed by his students. For instance, in the Rayan mosque, located in the Ferro Viario suburbs of Maputo, the imam of the mosque, Sheikh Hassan Ibrahim, has abolished recitation of *maulidi* after every three months and instead reduced it to once a year. He also cancelled *maulidi* celebration on the 27 Ramadan after *Taraweh* prayers. Moreover, he confessed that he has not succeeded in abolishing *qunut* (supplications at morning prayers) but the *qunut* practice irritates him.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, the imam of the Chadulia mosque, Sheikh Ali Abdalla, has made several changes in the mosque, such as abolishing collective *dua* (supplications) after every prayer and challenging the relevance of the *khitma* ritual for dead relatives. Sheikh Ali Abdalla has also begun to invite *Wahhabi* scholars to conduct Friday ritual prayers in the mosque, a practice that was not possible some years back.

It appears that the *Wahhabi* fraternity in Mozambique has recognised the effectiveness of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif's evangelical approach. They have almost abandoned the confrontational approach that was associated with them for a long period. Instead, they accept invitations from Sufi-oriented mosques where they preach Muslim unity, peaceful co-existence and propagate their version of Islam in a polite and diplomatic manner. The *Wahhabis* have begun to participate in seminars with other stakeholders, such as civil society groups, diplomatic community and state agents, to discuss important issues including democratic culture and development. This development contradicts Liazza Bonate's conclusion that Mozambican *Wahhabis* or *Ahl al-Sunna* can be considered as Islamists, a local brand of a global phenomenon (2007).

In 2006, Sheikh Ahmad Sharif moved to Pemba, Cape Delgado province, in Northern Mozambique, where he continued to perpetuate the legacy of Kizingitini. Given that many people speak Kiswahili in northern Mozambique, it became easier

Table 3. A few of Sheikh Ahmed Sharif's students in Mozambique.

Name	Current position
Sheikh Said Abass	Imam Itifaq mosque
Sheikh Ali Abdullah	Imam Cadulia mosque
Sheikh Hassan Ibrahim	Imam Rayan mosque
Sheikh Mchajir Mohamed	Imam Nyaka island
Sheikh Ismail Ali	Imam Cadiria mosque
Sheikh Rashid Ahmed	Imam Masjid Aqsa

for him to transmit Islamic learning and perform other religious duties until his death in 2008.

### Conclusion

Research on Islamic scholarship along the Indian Ocean coast has concentrated mainly on Sufi orders and *Ashraf* family networks. Perhaps, there exist several small actors, the likes of Madrasatul Badawy of Kizingitini, which have made a substantial contribution towards Islamic proselytising, but whose stories have not been told. We therefore need to narrate such untold stories.

Secondly, *Wahhabi* Islam has always been associated with a violent approach in spreading their gospel. However, the peaceful and diplomatic trajectory of Sheikh Ahmad Sharif in Mozambique has proved to be equally effective in achieving similar results. It appears, therefore, that the *Wahhabis* in Mozambique are beginning to pursue this path in their endeavours.

Finally, the long-held belief that Sufi orders in East Africa were responsible for promulgating Islamic knowledge to the masses when religious learning was initially a preserve of aristocrats has been put to question. A case in point is the Kizingitini community, which went through a series of frustrations and humiliations at the hands of the Riyadha elites (*Alawiyya* order) in their quest for religious knowledge.

### Notes

1. The Bajuni is a subgroup of the Swahili mainly found in Lamu, Malindi, Somalia and Tanzania. For more information on the Bajuni community, see the work of Janet Bujra (1968).
2. Sharif Khitami married into a *Sharif* family with Somali roots in Kizingitini.
3. Interview with Zakariyah Salim Fumo, October 25, 2010.
4. Telephone interview with Sharif Muhsin Sayyid Ali Badawy Jamal al-Layl, October 6, 2012.
5. Interview with Sheikh Harith Swaleh, November 13, 2011.
6. Interview with Sharif Abubakar Badawy Jamal-al Layl (Bakari Dini), April 2011.
7. Interview with Mwalimu Shebwana, a Qur'an teacher and companion of Sheikh Harith Swaleh on November 29, 2011. He died in April 2012.
8. Personal communication with Sheikh Harith Swaleh, November 13, 2011.
9. Personal communication with Sheikh Harith Swaleh, November 13, 2011.
10. Hussein Soud El-Maawy, 2009.
11. Not all students and parents of Kizingitini supported Sheikh Harith Swaleh when it came to confrontation with the Riyadha elites. This is because many people in the village believed that opposing or defying a *sharif* was sacrilegious. Besides, Sheikh Harith was not a *sharif*.
12. Bajuni is a subgroup of the Swahili that is matrilineal and independent. This community is tolerant and can easily integrate with other communities.
13. Interview with Sheikh Harith, February 12, 2011.
14. Personal communication with Sheikh Ahmed Msallam, April 15, 2011.
15. Telephone interview with Sharif Muhsin Sayyid Ali Jamal al-Layl, October 6, 2012.
16. *Maulidi* is the celebration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad. During this annual event, the Riyadha elites move from mosque to mosque and village to village to spread the blessings (*baraka*) from God and his prophet. In that state of holiness, the followers offer whatever they have to please God through His representatives on earth (the *sharifs* from Riyadha Mosque, in the case of Lamu). Part of the offerings included sexual exploits.

17. Interview with a local leader in Kizingitini, January 14, 2011, who requested anonymity. There are several narratives on the abuse of power by Riyadha elites, particularly in Kizingitini. These narratives are part of public memory in the village.
18. Interview with Sheikh Ahmed Msallam and Sheikh Yusuf Shebwana, March 17, 2011.
19. Interview with a disciple of Sheikh Harith who requested anonymity, February 19, 2011.
20. Telephone interview with Sharif Muhsin Sayyid Ali Badawy Jamal al-Layl, October 6, 2012.
21. Interview with Sharif Junaid Abdurrahman Badawy Jamal al-Layl, October 10, 2012.
22. Interview with Sheikh Abdul Carimo Nsau, April 14, 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.
23. Interview with Sheikh Abdul Carimo Nsau, April 14, 2011 in Maputo. The *hadith* book translated was titled *Ahadith al mukhtarah min al Bukhari sharef*.
24. Interview with Sheikh Aminudinn, Maputo, Mozambique, April 16, 2011.
25. Interview with Sheikh Rachid, April 13, 2011, Maputo, Mozambique.
26. Interview with Sheikh Hassan Ibrahim, Imam of Ferro Viario Mosque on April 14, 2011.

### Notes on contributor

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